

THE HOME SEWING HABITS OF A SELECTED GROUP OF  
MARRIED WOMEN LIVING IN A SMALL TOWN

by

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## INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of time it has been the woman's responsibility to see that the family is properly clothed. In most societies, man provides the source of revenue or the materials necessary for clothing the family, but the job of actually seeing that the family is provided with the proper clothing is the responsibility of the woman. This entails responsibility for either purchasing the clothing ready-made or making it herself as well as keeping clothing in wearable condition. .

There was a time when a dressmaker made much of the clothing worn by family members. By 1923, however, an increasing number of homemakers were relying on their own sewing skills or on ready-made garments to supply the family with the items necessary to clothe themselves (2).

This study was made to learn if there is growing interest in home sewing when the choice of available ready-made items is in abundance. Surveys find large numbers of women sewing in their homes. Weiss (4) says our society has become more sophisticated. Though there is an overwhelming number of ready-made household items and garments on the market, women are seeking to become individualistic and not carbon copies of the Joneses. Johnson (3) says:

Although home sewing has reached an all-time high, new fabrics and mass-produced ready-made garments are rapidly changing the clothing habits of millions of American women. These new developments are making it

possible for women to buy ready-made garments economically and in a variety of fabrics that few dreamed possible a few years ago. This means that home sewing for thrift is becoming a thing of the past, and the home economist in industry and education must face the fact.

It is often asked why girls today need to be taught clothing construction as it is easier and much less time-consuming to buy garments ready-made. The amount of sewing done in the home has been rising steadily (3). It is important, therefore, to find out what type of sewing is done and why, so that the needs of such persons may be met.

Many clothing programs in high school, adult education, and commercial classes are based primarily on the economic importance of home sewing. The success of these programs is jeopardized if the course content is not suited to needs of the students enrolled.

The specific purposes of this study were: to determine the frequency and the type of home sewing; to examine the expressed reasons for home sewing; to identify the type of equipment used for home sewing; to identify socio-economic factors associated with the frequency and type of home sewing; and to discover what part of the house is most used for sewing.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Studies on home sewing habits of women have been made by pattern and sewing machine companies, magazine publishers, the United States Department of Agriculture, and independent researchers. The data collected varied with the purpose of each study and the year in which it was done.

Conklyn (5) found in her study of 353 women that 76 per cent of the 90 single women and 82 per cent of the 263 married women had done some type of home sewing in the past year. Mending, darning, and altering were the type of sewing reported most often. The nonemployed married women did more sewing of all types than did the single and employed married women (significant at the .01 level). More mending and darning was done by nonemployed women than by employed women (significant at .05 level). The garments made most frequently were dresses, aprons, skirts, and blouses. Less than one-fourth of the group reported making large household items such as curtains and slipcovers. More nonemployed than employed women used leisure time for sewing (significant at .001 level). White collar workers' wives sewed in order to have better quality clothes more often than did blue collar workers' wives. More blue collar workers' wives than white collar workers' wives sewed because women in their families had always done so. Reasons given by both groups for sewing were economic, aesthetic, use of leisure time, and use of fabrics on hand. Wives of blue collar workers gave the

reason for sewing as being economical more often while white collar workers' wives gave aesthetic most often as their reason for sewing.

York's (11) study conducted at Oklahoma State University, used a group of twenty of the college's married home economics alumnae and twenty married women selected by random sample from four different areas of Stillwater, Oklahoma. Seventy per cent of the participants were doing some home sewing at the time of the interview, while 47.5 per cent had done some sewing during the past year. A total of 748 items had been constructed with an average of eighteen items made by each person. Some of the women who had done no sewing during that year had specific reasons for not doing so. One homemaker had arthritis and could not hold a needle. Another was pregnant and found her activities as a minister's wife all she could manage at the present. The reasons given for sewing were: felt it was more economical, 80 per cent; felt it was a pleasure, 57.5 per cent; could obtain a better fit, 47.5 per cent; could obtain better quality, 40 per cent; allowed for more originality, 37.5 per cent; could obtain a better selection of texture, 27.5 per cent; could obtain better styling, 12.5 per cent; and 5 per cent gave no answer. The construction of household items constituted 37.7 per cent of the number of items made by the alumnae group, while only 22.7 per cent of the items constructed by

the nonalumna group were household items. The homemakers had made approximately one-fourth of the total number of items for themselves. The garments constructed most often were street and casual dresses. A majority of the homemakers did some mending and altering of clothing. The educational background in regard to clothing construction had little influence on the amount of sewing done by each group.

Hoxworth (8), in a study done at Cornell University, tabulated findings of several sewing surveys which had been conducted by both commercial organizations and independent researchers. She found most home sewers were in income brackets between \$3,000 and \$7,500 and that income had little effect upon the type of home sewing done. It was found that the most sewing was done by homemakers between the ages of twenty-five and forty. Women's and misses' dresses were the garments constructed most often. The next most frequently constructed garments were separates. Several differences were found among these surveys. One such difference concerned the making of household items. It was concluded that income probably influenced this outcome because studies done with higher income groups reported more construction of household items. When a significant difference was found in the number of garments constructed yearly, it was felt studies done by pattern companies and sewing contest surveys could have been biased by sampling persons who generally sewed more than average. Another difference was noted in the reasons given

for sewing. Pattern companies felt a majority of the women sewed for creativity while a nationwide marketing research study found more women stated they sewed for economy. The studies bore out the fact that one of the major reasons for the large amount of home sewing done was for enjoyment, and that a great number of women sewed because they felt a need to be creative whether they recognized this or not.

In a study of 215 married women graduates of Oregon State College, Ledbetter (9) found 76.6 per cent of the graduates were doing some type of home sewing. Three of the women who were sewing indicated they would do more if the conditions were more favorable. The graduates who had the most clothing construction courses while in school were doing more sewing than those who had taken only one or two elementary courses. Eighty-six per cent of the women stated they sewed to save money; 81 per cent felt they could purchase fabrics of better quality for the money expended; 73 per cent said they enjoyed sewing; 64.5 per cent stated they sewed because they could get better workmanship; 64 per cent sewed to utilize outdated garments; 60 per cent sewed for creative appeal; 26 per cent sewed because they had difficulty being fitted in ready-made garments; and 12.5 per cent stated they sewed because they had difficulty in finding suitable ready-to-wear garments. The reasons stated for now sewing by 57.9 per cent of those who did not sew was lack of time; 52.6 per cent felt they had insufficient

equipment with which to sew; 52.6 per cent did not sew because they were uncertain of becomingness of the finished product; 42.1 per cent felt they lacked the necessary skills to sew; 42.1 per cent did not sew because they preferred the appearance of ready-made garments; 26.3 per cent stated they did not sew because they had no convenient place to sew; and 26.3 per cent did not sew because they disliked sewing.

Thirty-one of the 165 women who had done some sewing expressed a desire to sew more, but were unable to do so for the reasons given by the nineteen who did not sew. House-dresses and street dresses were the items made most often by those who preferred to sew for themselves. Children's garments were the next most frequently constructed items, with curtains and draperies the most common household item made. Seventy-seven per cent owned their own sewing machines. Forty of the forty-nine who did not own a machine borrowed one when it was needed. Eighty-five per cent of the sewing machines were electric, and 46.4 per cent of those were portable. Other equipment owned and used by the graduates included pinking shears, steam iron, skirt marker, full length mirror, sewing cabinet, sleeve board, dress form, tracing wheel, buttonhole attachment, and cording foot.

In a study similar to Ledbetter's, done a few years later with 140 home economics graduates from the University of Utah, Frazier (6) found similar results. A smaller number, 18.6 per cent, did not sew at all. Reasons for not

sewing given in the order of importance were lack of time, preference for the appearance of ready-made garments, difficulty in fitting themselves, and uncertain of the becomingness of the finished product. Most graduates who sewed at home stated they did so to save money, for enjoyment, because they could get better fabrics, for the creative value, for better workmanship, and because they had difficulty finding ready-made garments that fitted properly. The women generally preferred to sew for themselves. Children's garments were the second most frequently constructed items. Most of the garments made for people outside the family were dresses. The garments most often constructed for husbands were shirts, pajamas, and jackets. More children's garments were made over than any other item, followed by garments for the women themselves. One hundred sixteen of the graduates owned their own sewing machine, two rented machines, and twenty-two borrowed a machine when it was needed. One hundred five of the machines were electric and eleven were treadle. The pieces of small equipment most frequently owned were iron, yardstick, thimble, cutting shears, tape line, and pinking shears. The pieces of small equipment most frequently used were an iron, cutting shears, yardstick, tape line, pinking shears, and pressing cloth. Three items used by all who owned them were full length mirrors, squares, and seam boards. While one hundred twenty-five graduates owned thimbles, only 75 used them.

Mitchell (10) stated in her study of 100 women in Lubbock County, Texas, that if this group of women was typical, then the women who purchased fabric were those engaged in home sewing. She concluded that the women sewed for economy, enjoyment, to obtain a better fit in their apparel, for originality which could not be obtained in ready-made garments, and to get better quality. This group of women felt they could save approximately 50 per cent of the amount spent on clothing by sewing in the home. The largest group doing home sewing were in the \$5,000 to \$9,999 income bracket. The low income bracket where there was the greatest need to sew at home had a much lower percentage doing home sewing. In this study women from thirty to forty years of age with teenage daughters did the most sewing.

Harris (7) found most of the families of homemaking students in Pontotoc County, Oklahoma and the families of employees of the East Central State College, Ada, Oklahoma, had done home sewing within the past year. The primary reasons given for sewing by the group were for economy and pleasure. They constructed more women's garments than any other type of garment. Most mending was done by large families and families in the low income group. More construction of large household items was done in families in the high income group than in families with lower incomes. The correlation between a family's income and the ownership of a recent model sewing machine or other sewing equipment was

low. Sewing skills had been learned by the majority of women in homemaking classes. Few planned a definite time for sewing. Many of the employed Pontotoc County women did not sew because they lacked time.

## PROCEDURE

### Development of the Questionnaire

The objectives of this study were used as a guide in identifying categories which could be broken down into specific questions. These categories were:

- \* Type of sewing done
- \* Frequency of sewing done
- \* Persons for whom the sewing was done
- \* Reasons for sewing
- > Type of sewing preferred
- \* Type of sewing equipment used
- \* Type of sewing equipment desired
- < Room placement of sewing machine
- \* Satisfaction with available sewing space
- \* Clothing construction education
- , Socio-economic factors.

A questionnaire was developed containing questions where the appropriate answers could be checked or short explanations written. This questionnaire was sent to a sample of married women graduate students attending Kansas State University during the summer of 1964. After preliminary information was tabulated and analyzed the questionnaire was revised for mailing. The instrument used for collecting data in this study is found in Appendix A.

The Sample

Bolivar, Missouri, a town of about five thousand people, was selected as the population to be sampled. The town is supported by farmers and several small industries. The public school system maintains the highest academic rating possible in the State of Missouri. A three-year church-supported college which is scheduled to become a full four-year institution in 1966 helps to give the town a religious atmosphere.

The nine churches in Bolivar were chosen for the means of selecting the sample. Each minister was contacted by either personal interview or telephone. This was done to gain the cooperation of the ministers in securing the number of married women between the ages of twenty and thirty-five years of age attending their church. Some of the ministers gave the number at the time of the first contact, some mailed the information at a later date, others turned the situation over to the church secretary who then mailed the information. Two of the ministers did not respond. After receiving the information regarding the number of women in the desired age group available from each church it was determined it would be necessary to use all the women whose names had been received to obtain an adequate sample. Two of the small churches indicated they did not have anyone within the age group desired who was married. The ministers or secretaries of the five remaining churches were then contacted a second

time (this time by letter) to obtain the names and addresses of the women. An example of this letter is to be found in Appendix B. Four of the five churches sent back names and addresses. The fifth church was contacted twice more by letter but no response was obtained. Questionnaires were sent to homemakers from four churches (three Protestant and one Roman Catholic).

One objective of this study was to find the reasons for home sewing. It was hoped the information found could be used to determine if there was a need for changes in the teaching of clothing construction and the making of household items. Married women were chosen for the sample since a full-time homemaker can usually be expected to do more and varied type of sewing than a career girl. The age range set allowed for a relatively typical cross section of your married homemakers. The upper age limit was set at thirty-five. Very young homemakers were desired because they represented the group not long out of school with young children. However, limiting the age group to the very young would not have included a sufficient number of homemakers with a more settled and developed family life; hence the age was extended to thirty-five. The presence of children was not necessarily a reason for desiring married women, however, but it was an important element for family life.

Mailing the Questionnaire

The questionnaire (Appendix A), an introductory letter, and a self-addressed stamped envelope were mailed to 107 women. The letters were hand addressed to help keep them from becoming confused with second-class mail.

Analysis of Questionnaires

Fifty-seven usable questionnaires were returned. These included four from women over the age of thirty-five who provided information indicating identification with the younger group.

The responses on the questionnaires were tabulated and analyzed using numbers, percentages, and two-way tables to interpret the information. Question number fifteen was excluded from analysis because of the manner in which it was answered.

## FINDINGS

To establish the socio-economic factor the occupation of the husband was classified on the Roe Scale (1). The Roe Scale classifies occupations by type and level. This scale could not be used to classify the occupation of three husbands. Two women had husbands who were college students and one was divorced. The Roe Scale does not classify students in occupation levels. The largest number (26 per cent) of the occupations fell under the "general culture" type of occupation and the least number (4 per cent) fell under the "service" type of occupation. There were six levels of occupations in the Roe Scale. The highest occupation level is one. None of the husbands' occupations fell into the sixth level of the scale. In the classification of occupation types there were seven groups but no one fell in the "art and entertainment" group. Table I shows the occupation classification of the husbands by type and level.

Some socio-economic information not related to the Roe Scale was included on the questionnaire to obtain a better understanding of the women and their families.

There were nine women between the ages of twenty and twenty-four, seventeen between twenty-five and twenty-nine, twenty-seven between thirty and thirty-five years, and four gave their age as over thirty-five. The fifty-seven families had a total of one hundred fifteen children. Of these

TABLE I

## THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE OCCUPATION LEVEL OF THE HUSBAND TO THE OCCUPATION TYPE ON THE ROE SCALE

Occupation type	Occupation level					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Service				2		2
Business		1	6			7
Organization		3	3	2		8
Technology		1		7	2	10
Outdoor				8		8
Science	2	2	1			5
General culture	7	7				14
Totals	9	14	18	11	2	54

fifty-six were girls and fifty-nine were boys. The average number of children per family was two. Eight families had no children, thirteen had one child, nineteen had two children, ten had three children, five had four children, one family had five children, and one family had six children. The number of children in each age group are classified by sex as shown in Table II. These groups were determined by the group classifications of infants, toddlers and preschoolers, school age children to teenage, teenagers through high school age, and those thought to be above high school age.

TABLE II  
THE NUMBER AND AGES OF CHILDREN BY SEX OF 57 WOMEN

Ages	Number of boys	Number of girls	Total
Under 12 months	3	1	4
1 to 5 years	24	24	48
6 to 12 years	22	26	48
13 to 17 years	9	4	13
18 years and over	1	1	2
Totals .	59	56	115

To determine the frequency and type of home sewing done women were asked to check how often they did certain types of sewing. These frequencies were based on the respondent's opinion of how much sewing constituted often or sometimes. Seven of the fifty-seven women indicated that they did no garment construction and two never mended garments. However, sixty-five per cent altered or remodeled garments often or sometimes. Draperies, curtains, and bed-spreads were often or sometimes made by 61 per cent of the women. Only 16 per cent of the women made slipcovers. This is shown in Table III.

In addition to the categories for different types of sewing shown on the questionnaire, two women sometimes made quilts, two made small household items often or sometimes, and one woman sometimes made rugs.

TABLE III  
THE EXPRESSED FREQUENCY AND TYPE OF HOME SEWING  
DONE BY 57 MARRIED WOMEN

Type of sewing done	Frequency of sewing done			
	Often	Sometimes	Never	Total
Garment construction	27	23	7	57
Mending garments	33	22	2	57
Altering and remodeling garments	10	27	20	57
Making draperies, curtains, bedspreads	5	30	22	57
Making slipcovers	1	8	48	57

When the number of garments constructed by each woman was compared to frequency of construction, it was found that three women who had not made garments in the past year sometimes sewed. This is shown in Table IV. This may indicate that although these women had not made any garments in the past year, they had done so at sometime in the past and were planning to do so in the future.

Categories of different kinds of garments were listed on the questionnaire and the women were asked to give the number of each kind of garment they had constructed in the past year. From the total of 1088 garments reported to have been made by the women within one year, women's garments represented the largest number of items, 52 per cent. Children's garments, the second in number, represented 46 per

TABLE IV

THE NUMBER OF GARMENTS MADE AND THE EXPRESSED FREQUENCY  
OF GARMENT CONSTRUCTION DONE

Number of garments made	Expressed frequency of garment construction done			
	Often	Sometimes	Never	Total
None	0	3	7	10
1 - 9	1	11	0	12
10 - 19	6	7	0	13
20 - 39	13	2	0	15
40 - 59	5	0	0	5
71 - 76	2	0	0	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>57</b>

cent. Men's garments represented the least with 2 per cent. Table V shows the total number of garments made in each category.

Only eight of the fifty-seven women sewed for their husbands. A total of eighteen items were constructed for men. These included eleven sport shirts, three sleepwear garments, two jackets, one pair of slacks, and one vest.

Table VI shows the total number of specific kinds of children's garments constructed for both family members and children outside the immediate family. The construction of dresses represented 43 per cent of the total number of garments made for children.

TABLE V

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF GARMENTS  
MADE BY 47 WOMEN\*

Type of garment	Number
Children's garments made for family members	470
Women's garments made for themselves	423
Garments made for persons outside the immediate family	117
Women's garments made for other family members	60
Men's garments made for family members	18
Total	1,088

\*Only 47 of the 57 women made garments.

The kind and number of women's garments constructed are reported in Table VII. This table shows that the women sewed three times as often for themselves as for other women in the family and women outside the immediate family. Of those outside the immediate family for whom sewing was done friends represented a total of thirteen or 40 per cent. The remaining 60 per cent was composed of six nieces representing 18 per cent of the total, five mothers or 15 per cent, three sisters or 9 per cent ranked third, two grandmothers and two nephews each representing six per cent, one aunt and one sister-in-law each of whom represented 3 per cent of the total.

TABLE VI

THE KIND AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN'S GARMENTS MADE FOR  
 FAMILY MEMBERS AND PERSONS OUTSIDE THE  
 IMMEDIATE FAMILY

Kind of garments	Garments made for family members	Garments for persons outside the immedi- ate family
Dresses	208	9
Blouses	51	1
Girl's slacks	39	9
Sleepwear	39	
Skirts	31	
Shirts	31	
Girl's shorts	25	
Layette items	13	1
Robes	10	2
Girl's coats	5	
Jackets	3	5
Boy's coats	4	
Jumpers	3	3
Boy's vests	2	
Sunsuits	2	
Boy's pants	1	3
Costumes	1	
Totals	468	36

TABLE VII

THE KIND AND NUMBER OF WOMEN'S GARMENTS MADE BY THE WOMEN  
FOR THEMSELVES, FOR OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS, AND FOR  
PERSONS OUTSIDE THE IMMEDIATE FAMILY

Kind of garments	Number of garments			
	For the women themselves	For other family members	For persons outside immediate family	Total
Cotton dresses	117	18	34	169
Skirts	74	10	3	87
Better dresses	67	12	6	85
Blouses	54	2	15	71
Suits	26	2	4	32
Slacks	23		3	26
Shorts	23			23
Housecoats	12	4	7	23
Jackets	10			10
Sleepwear	6	8		14
Coats	5	1		6
Formal wear	5	3		8
Bikini	1			1
Maternity dresses			9	9
Jumpers			3	3
Cape			1	1
Culottes			1	1
Totals	423	60	86	569

Large household items made by the homemakers consisted of eighty-four pair of curtains, thirty-four pairs of draperies, seven slipcovers, and four bedspreads. Small household items were not listed because past studies had shown that although a woman did not make garments or large household items she might spend her leisure time doing embroidery work or crocheting small household items. However, a few women did list small household items they had constructed during the past year. These were listed, therefore, not as handiwork items made by persons who seldom or never sew but as items made by women who are normally engaged in the construction of garments and larger household items as well. These items consisted of seventeen "toss" pillows, twelve tea towels, four pair of pillow cases, four pillow tops, three window shades, one vanity skirt, one covered headboard for a bed, and one covered chest.

Ninety-five per cent of the women made hemline changes during the past year as shown in Table VIII, although when asked to express the frequency with which they altered or remodeled garments, twenty women indicated they never altered or remodeled garments. When asked to show the frequency and type only three women did not do some type of altering or remodeling. This discrepancy could have been because some women did not consider the changing of a hemline as an alteration on a garment. Other alteration changes were done by 14 to 45 per cent of the women. Complete remodeling or

restyling of a garment was done by only 23 per cent of the women.

TABLE VIII

## THE FREQUENCY AND TYPE OF ALTERING AND REMODELING REPORTED BY 57 WOMEN

Type of altering and remodeling done	Frequency of altering and remodeling reported			
	Often	Sometimes	Never	Total
Changing hemlines	34	20	3	57
Changing sleeve length	3	23	31	57
Changing size of waist line	2	19	35	57
Changing hip line	2	14	41	57
Changing bust line		8	49	57
Complete restyling	4	9	44	57
Totals	46	93	203	342

The women were asked to express their reasons for making new garments in an open-end question. Table IX shows these answers ranked as given on the questionnaire. Though there was a difference of only one in the two reasons "more economical" and "enjoyment", it was noted that seventeen of the twenty-three women who gave "enjoyment" as a reason for home sewing listed it first while eleven of the twenty-four women who gave "more economical" as a reason listed it first.

An open-end question was used to identify the reasons women alter and remodel clothing. The reasons are listed in

TABLE IX  
THE EXPRESSED REASONS GIVEN BY 57 WOMEN IN RANKED ORDER FOR MAKING NEW GARMENTS

Expressed reason for making new garments	Number in order given					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
More economical	11	10	1	2		24
Enjoyment	17	3	3			23
Better workmanship		6	2			8
Better fit	3	4	1			8
Better quality	3	1	1	1		6
Garments were needed	5	1				6
Could not find what was wanted	2	1			1	4
Opportunity to be creative	2		1	1		4
Enjoyed seeing finished product		1	1			2
Allowed more styles of clothing	1			1		2
Good use of time		1		1		2
Found it challenging	1					1
Seldom purchased ready-made garments		1				1
Desired high fashion				1		1
Was in the mood to sew		1				1
Made matching garments for family		1				1
Allowed individualism			1			1
No answer	12					12

ranked order in Table X. Fourteen of the forty-two women who gave reasons for altering and remodeling indicated that it was necessary for proper fit.

TABLE X

THE EXPRESSED REASONS GIVEN BY 57 WOMEN IN RANKED ORDER FOR ALTERING AND REMODELING OF GARMENTS

Expressed reasons for the altering and remodeling of garments	Numbers in order given			
	1	2	3	Total
Necessary for proper fit	13	1		14
Desired a change in the style	6	6		12
Fabric or garment still usable	3	3	1	7
Made over hand-me-downs	3	2		5
Let out garments to allow for growth	5			5
Garments needed and could not afford new one	4			4
Liked fabric of garment	2	1		3
More economical	2	1		3
For better appearance	2			2
Believed she had to	1			1
Satisfaction in seeing garment made useful	1			1
No answer	15			15

The women checked their reasons for mending garments. These reasons are shown in Table XI. Seventy per cent of the women in the study who mended garments felt they could save money in the long run because the clothes would last longer. Another 47 per cent believed they "had to" mend clothing.

TABLE XI  
REASONS GIVEN FOR MENDING CLOTHING BY NUMBER  
AND PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN

Reason given for mending clothing	Number	Percentage
I find I can save money in the long run because the clothes last longer	39	70
I believe I have to	27	47
I prefer to see patches rather than holes	22	39
I can mend while doing such things as watching TV, which justifies the use of that time for relaxation	15	24
It shows appreciation for my family	1	2

Table XII lists garments which the women reported liking to make when they had the time. Less desire was shown for making men's garments than for making women's and children's garments. In association with the kinds of garments the women enjoyed making, the women were asked to indicate on a check list why they preferred not to make the garments which were not checked. Twenty-six of the fifty-seven women said they did not make those items because they did not have the sewing skills needed to make them; twenty-one because they could not get the desired finished appearance; eighteen because they lacked the time necessary to make such garments; twelve because they believed it was as cheap or cheaper to buy the garments ready made; eleven because they could not make the clothes fit satisfactorily; and four because they

TABLE XII

THE NUMBER OF WOMEN WHO STATED THEY LIKED  
TO MAKE A SPECIFIC GARMENT

Women's garments	No.:	Children's garments	No.:	Men's garments	No.
	:		:		:
Cotton dresses	26	Dresses	28	Sport shirts	9
Skirts	24	Skirts	17	Sleepwear	5
Better dresses	23	Blouses	17	Robes	3
Blouses	13	Sleepwear	14	Vests	2
Suits	12	Girl's shorts		Sport shorts	2
Sleepwear	11	Robes	12	Dress shirts	1
Housecoats	10	Girl's		Jackets	1
Jackets	8	slacks	9		
Slacks	7	Shirts	6		
Formal wear	7	Layette			
Shorts	6	items	6		
Coats	4	Girl's			
Culottes	1	coats	4		
		Boy's coats	3		
		Boy's pants	2		
		Jackets	2		
		Boy's vests	1		
		Playsuits	1		

desired fabric which was not readily available. Lack of money for material, lack of equipment, no desire to sew, and annoyance by children were all reasons given by individuals for not making those garments.

Each woman was also asked to describe the type of sewing machine she owned and to indicate the kind of stitch made by her sewing machine. Thirty of the fifty-seven women owned a console type sewing machine, seventeen of which were straight stitch machines and thirteen were zig zag. Of the seventeen portable sewing machines six were straight stitch machines and eleven were zig zag. Two women had treadle sewing machines and eight women did not own a sewing machine.

The number of garments each woman made and the type of sewing machine she owned is shown in Table XIII. Three women who did not have a sewing machine had made from ten to nineteen garments which seemed to indicate that they either borrowed or rented a sewing machine. Five of the ten who had made no garments owned a sewing machine. Three of these five sewing machines belonged to women who indicated they mended and sometimes constructed garments. Four women who had made no garments and had no sewing machine did mending which seemed to indicate it was done either by hand or on a borrowed or rented sewing machine. The two women who made the largest number of garments owned straight stitch console sewing machines.

TABLE XIII  
TYPE OF SEWING MACHINE OWNED BY 57 WOMEN AND THE NUMBER OF GARMENTS MADE

Number of garments made	Type of sewing machine owned						Total No. of women
	None	Treadle	S.S.	S.S.	Z.Z.	Portable*	
None	5	1	3				10
1 - 9 garments			3	3	3		12
10 - 19 garments	3	1	2	2	4	2	14
20 - 39 garments			6		4	4	14
40 - 59 garments			1	1	2	1	5
71 - 76 garments			2				2
Total number of machines	8	2	17	6	13	11	57

\*S.S. Console is straight stitch console and S.S. Portable is straight stitch portable. Z.Z. Console is zig zag stitch console and Z.Z. Portable is zig zag stitch portable.

The relationship of frequency of mending done and type of sewing machine owned is shown in Table XIV. Three women who had no sewing machine often mended and four sometimes mended. More than 50 per cent of the women who often mended owned a console sewing machine while exactly 50 per cent of the women who sometimes mended owned a console sewing machine.

Twenty-two women who did some altering and remodeling owned console sewing machines. Eleven owned portable sewing machines. One woman who often did altering and remodeling owned a treadle sewing machine, (Table XV).

The eight women who owned no sewing machine never made large household items. The type of sewing machine owned by the women and the expressed frequency of construction of draperies, curtains, and bedspreads are shown in Table XVI. Three women who often made those items owned portable sewing machines and two owned console sewing machines. Of the eight women who indicated they sometimes made slipcovers, six owned console sewing machines, three straight stitch machines, and three zig zag stitch machines. The one woman who often made slipcovers owned a console zig zag stitch sewing machine.

The women were asked to indicate if they felt more equipment would improve their sewing. In answering the question twenty-four women marked yes, twenty-seven marked no, and six gave no answer. Table XVII shows the kind of sewing and pressing equipment the women desired. Six women desired

TABLE XIV  
SEWING MACHINE OWNED AND THE FREQUENCY AT WHICH MENDING IS DONE

Mending	Type of sewing machine owned					Total
	None	Treadle	S.S. Console*	S.S. Portable*	Z.Z. Console*	
Often	3	1	9	3	9	8
Sometimes	4	1	7	3	4	3
Never	1		1		2	2
Totals	8	2	17	6	13	11
						57

\*S.S. Console is straight stitch console and S.S. Portable is straight stitch portable. Z.Z. Console is zig zag stitch console and Z.Z. Portable is zig zag stitch portable.

TABLE XV  
SEWING MACHINE OWNED AND THE FREQUENCY OF ALTERING AND REMODELING OF GARMENTS

Amount of altering and remodeling	Type of sewing machine owned						Total
	None	Treadle	S.S. Console*	S.S. Portable*	Z.Z. Console*	Z.Z. Portable*	
Often	1	2	1	3	3	3	10
Sometimes	3	11	2	6	5	5	27
Never	5	1	4	3	4	3	20
Totals	8	2	17	6	13	11	57

\*S.S. Console is straight stitch console and S.S. Portable is straight stitch portable. Z.Z. Console is zig zag stitch console and Z.Z. Portable is zig zag stitch portable.

TABLE XVI  
SEWING MACHINE OWNED AND THE FREQUENCY OF CONSTRUCTION OF DRAPERY,  
CURTAINS, AND BEDSPREADS

Amount of construction done	Type of sewing machine owned					Total
	None	Treadle	S.S. Console*	S.S. Portable*	Z.Z. Console*	
Often			1	2	2	5
Sometimes		1	13	4	7	30
Never	8	1	4	1	4	22
<b>Totals</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>57</b>

\*S.S. Console is straight stitch console and S.S. Portable is straight stitch portable. Z.Z. Console is zig zag stitch console and Z.Z. Portable is zig zag stitch portable.

new sewing machines. Three of those women did not own a sewing machine, two owned straight stitch console sewing machines, and one owned a treadle sewing machine. The sewing item wanted most often was the dress form and the pressing item wanted most often was the sleeve board. No inventory was taken of the small sewing and pressing equipment presently owned.

TABLE XVII

DESIRED SEWING AND PRESSING EQUIPMENT WHICH WOMEN STATED  
WOULD HELP THEM TO DO MORE SEWING

Sewing equipment	No. of women	Pressing equipment	No. of women
Dress form	10	Sleeve board	9
Hem marker	8	Pressing mitt	5
New sewing machine	6	Pressing ham	4
Tracing wheel	3	Pounding block	4
Tailor's chalk	3	Seam board	2
Pinking shears	2	Steam-dry iron	2
Special sewing table	2	Pressing roll	1
Seam gauge	1	Pressing cloth	1

In order to learn what part of the house was used most often for sewing the women were asked to indicate the room in which their sewing machine was kept. Eighteen (32 per cent) used the bedroom; eight (14 per cent) the living room; six (11 per cent) the dining room; five (9 per cent) the den; four (7 per cent) the utility room; three (5 per cent) the kitchen; two (4 per cent) the closet; and one each (2 per cent) a special sewing room, a hall, or bathroom of a beauty shop. Eight (14 per cent) did not own a sewing machine.

Table XVIII shows the room placement of the sewing machine and the expressed frequency of garment construction.

TABLE XVIII

## ROOM PLACEMENT OF THE SEWING MACHINE AND THE FREQUENCY OF GARMENT CONSTRUCTION DONE BY THE 57 WOMEN

Room placement	Frequency of garment construction done			Total No. of women
	Often	Sometimes	Never	
Owned no sewing machine	1	2	5	8
Bedroom	9	7	2	18
Living room	3	5		8
Dining room	4	2		6
Den	3	2		5
Utility room	1	3		4
Kitchen	3			3
Closet	1	1		2
Special sewing room	1			1
Hall		1		1
Bathroom	1			1
<b>Totals</b>		27	23	7
				57

Only one woman who owned a sewing machine did not do some type of mending. Fourteen women who often did mending kept their sewing machines in the bedroom, as shown in Table XIX. One of the two women who never did any mending kept her sewing machine in the kitchen while the other had no sewing machine. The two women who kept their sewing machines in the hall and the bathroom sometimes did mending, while the one woman with the special sewing room mended often.

No women who did not own a sewing machine altered and remodeled garments often, but three sometimes did. The woman

TABLE XIX

ROOM PLACEMENT OF THE SEWING MACHINE AND THE FREQUENCY  
OF MENDING DONE BY THE 57 WOMEN

Room placement	Frequency of mending done			Total No. of women
	Often	Sometimes	Never	
Owned no sewing machine	3	4	1	8
Bedroom	14	4		18
Living room	5	3		8
Dining room	3	3		6
Den	3	2		5
Utility room	2	2		4
Kitchen	2		1	3
Closet		2		2
Special sewing room	1			1
Hall		1		1
Bathroom		1		1
 Totals	 33	 22	 2	 57

who kept her sewing machine in the special sewing room often did altering and remodeling of garments. The one woman who kept her sewing machine in the bathroom sometimes altered and remodeled garments, and the woman who kept her sewing machine in the hall never did this type of sewing (Table XX).

Two of the five women who indicated they often made draperies, curtains, and bedspreads kept their sewing machines in the bedroom, and one each in a special sewing room, utility room, and a closet. Thirty women sometimes made draperies, curtains, and bedspreads. Twelve of those women kept their sewing machine in the bedroom, six in the dining room, five in the den, three in the living room, two in the kitchen, and

TABLE XX

THE ROOM PLACEMENT OF THE SEWING MACHINE AND FREQUENCY OF ALTERING AND REMODELING DONE BY 57 WOMEN

Room placement	Frequency of altering and remodeling done			Total
	Often	Sometimes	Never	
Owned no sewing machine		3	5	8
Bedroom	4	9	5	18
Living room	1	5	2	8
Dining room	2	2	2	6
Den	1	4		5
Utility room	1	1	2	4
Kitchen		2	1	3
Closet			2	2
Special sewing room	1			1
Hall			1	1
Bathroom		1		1
Totals	10	27	20	57

one each kept their machine in a bathroom or hall.

Of the forty-nine women owning sewing machines, ten kept them open when not in use. Table XXI shows the frequency garments were made and the room placement of the sewing machine when it was not in use. The two women who made the largest number of garments did not keep the sewing machine open when they were not using it. Eight of the women who kept the sewing machine open when not in use made from twenty to fifty-nine garments each.

When asked if the placement of the sewing machine in another room would allow for more sewing, thirty-eight women said "no" while twelve answered "yes". Those who checked

TABLE XXI

THE ROOM PLACEMENT OF THE SEWING MACHINE AND THE FREQUENCY  
OF DRAPERY, CURTAIN, AND BEDSPREAD CONSTRUCTION

Room placement	Frequency of drapery, curtain, and bed- spread construction done			Total
	Often	Sometimes	Never	
Owned no sewing machine			8	8
Bedroom	2	12	4	18
Living room		3	5	8
Dining room		6		6
Den		5		5
Utility room	1		3	4
Kitchen		2	1	3
Closet	1		1	2
Special sewing room	1			1
Hall		1		1
Bathroom		1		1
Totals	5	30	22	57

"yes" were also asked to check the room in her house where the sewing machine might be placed to allow for more sewing. Only two of the twelve women indicated definite rooms. One of those two women checked the bedroom and the other the dining room. One other woman felt the sewing machine needed to be moved but had no other room in which to place it, while nine were very specific in stating they wanted to place the machine in a specific sewing room. Nine women who had checked the no answer wanted to place their sewing machines in other rooms in their homes but apparently did not have the space available. Six of these women wanted a special sewing

room in which to place their machine and individuals would place their machine in a kitchen, den, or utility room were space available.

Thirty-seven women said "yes", sixteen said "no", and four gave no answer when asked if they could justify a special sewing area in a laundry or utility room if they were building new homes with their present incomes. The women were also asked if they could justify a room used exclusively for sewing if they were building new homes with their family's present income. There were only six "yes" answers to this question, forty-seven women answered "no", and four gave no answer. Of the six women giving a "yes" answer, four wanted to place their machine in a special sewing room to allow for more sewing. Table XXII shows the relation of the occupational level of the husband on the scale by Roe (1) to answers given by the women pertaining to their ability to justify a sewing area in a laundry or utility room and a room used exclusively for sewing. Forty-seven per cent of the women who felt they could justify a sewing area in a laundry or utility room were from the first two or higher socio-economic occupation levels, 33 per cent in the third level, and 20 per cent in levels four and five.

Two women in age group twenty to twenty-four years of age often did garment construction, five did it sometimes, and two reported never making new garments. Between the ages twenty-five to twenty-nine years, twelve women did garment

TABLE XXII

THE OCCUPATION LEVEL OF THE HUSBAND AND THE ABILITY OF 50 WOMEN TO JUSTIFY IF BUILDING A NEW HOME AT THE FAMILY'S PRESENT INCOME WITH TWO TYPES OF SEWING AREAS\*

Justification ability and type of sewing areas	Husband's occupation levels					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Could justify a sewing area in a laundry or utility room	6	11	12	5	2	36
Could not justify a sewing area in a laundry or utility room	2	3	5	4		14
Could justify an area used exclusively for sewing		2	2	1		5
Could not justify an area used exclusively for sewing	8	12	15	8	2	45

\*Only 50 women are shown in this table because 3 could not be classified on the Roe Scale and 4 women gave no answer.

construction often, four sometimes, and one never. Thirteen women between the ages of thirty and thirty-five years constructed garments often, ten sometimes, and four never. All four of the women over thirty-five years of age did garment construction sometimes.

The only two women who never mended were between the ages of thirty and thirty-five. There were five women between the ages of twenty and twenty-four who sometimes mended, seven between the ages of twenty-five and twenty-nine,

seven between the ages of thirty and thirty-five, and three over the age of thirty-five. There were four women who often mended between the ages of twenty and twenty-four, ten between the ages of twenty-five and twenty-nine, eight between the ages of thirty and thirty-five, and one woman over thirty-five mended often.

Fewer women altered and remodeled garments than made new garments or mended clothing. Only one woman between the ages of twenty and twenty-four often altered or remodeled garments. Three women in that age group sometimes did, and five never altered or remodeled garments. Three women in the age group of twenty-five to twenty-nine often altered and remodeled garments, eight sometimes did, and six never did. Between the ages of thirty and thirty-five six women did altering and remodeling of garments often, thirteen did it sometimes, and eight never did it. Three women over thirty-five years of age sometimes did altering and remodeling of garments and one never did.

Four women between the ages of twenty and twenty-four sometimes made draperies, curtains, and bedspreads, and five never made those items. Draperies, curtains, and bedspreads were made often by three women between the ages twenty-five and twenty-nine, sometimes by nine women, and never by five women. Of the women between the ages of thirty and thirty-five, two often made those items, sixteen women sometimes did, and nine never made them. One woman over thirty-five years of age made draperies, curtains, and bedspreads

sometimes and three women never did.

Only one woman between the ages of thirty and thirty-five years indicated she often made slipcovers. One woman between the ages of twenty and twenty-four years sometimes made slipcovers, three women between the ages of twenty-five and twenty-nine sometimes did, three women between the ages of thirty and thirty-five sometimes did, and one woman over thirty-five sometimes made slipcovers. A total of forty-eight of the fifty-seven women said they never made slipcovers. Eight of those were between the ages of twenty and twenty-four, fourteen were between the ages of twenty-five and twenty-nine, twenty-three were between the ages of thirty and thirty-five, and three were over thirty-five.

One woman stated she did no type of sewing. When asked for reasons for not making new garments, she stated she had no desire to sew.

The number of children's garments constructed according to the number of children in each family is shown in Table XXIII. The largest number of garments were constructed by a woman with two children and one with three children. Twenty-one women constructed no children's garments. Six women had no children while the remainder had from one to four children.

Child annoyance kept one woman from doing more sewing. Table XXIV shows the number of children and the total number of garments made by each woman. The woman with six children

TABLE XXIII

THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN'S GARMENTS CONSTRUCTED BY  
57 WOMEN AND THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER FAMILY

Number of garments constructed	Number of children per family						Total
	0	1	2	3	4	5	
None	6	7	5	2	1		21
1 to 9 garments	2	2	6	3	2	1	16
10 to 19 garments	2	4	4			1	11
20 to 29 garments	2	3		2			7
30 to 35 garments		1	1				2
Totals	8	13	19	10	5	1	57

constructed twenty garments and the one with five fourteen garments. Six women who had no children made from one to thirty-nine garments. Ten women with one child made from one to fifty-nine garments. Sixteen women with two children made from one to seventy-six garments. Seven women with three children made from one to seventy-one garments and four women with four children made from one to thirty-nine garments.

Six women were employed part time, fourteen were employed full time, and the remaining thirty-seven were not employed outside the home. Six of the women were employed full time and one was employed part time as bookkeepers. Three of the women employed full time and two women employed part time were secretary-stenographers. Three women were

TABLE XXIV

## THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ALL GARMENTS CONSTRUCTED BY EACH WOMAN AND THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN FAMILY

Number of garments constructed	Number of children per family						Total
	0	1	2	3	4	5	
None	2	3	3	1	1		10
1 to 9 garments	1	4	4	2	1		12
10 to 19 garments	4	2	3	2	1	1	13
20 to 39 garments	1	2	5	4	2	1	15
40 to 59 garments		2	3				5
71 to 76 garments			1	1			2
Totals	8	13	19	10	5	1	57

employed full time as teachers and one woman was a substitute teacher. One of the teachers taught on the high school level and the other two were grade school teachers. One woman was employed as a beauty operator and another a seamstress in a garment factory. One individual was employed part time as a cashier and one as a registered nurse.

The employment of the women and the number of garments constructed are shown in Table XXV. Of the ten women who had made no garments five did not work outside the home, four worked full time, and one worked part time. Thirty-seven women who did not work outside the home made from one to seventy-six garments. The two women who made seventy-one and

seventy-six garments did not work outside the home. Only one of five women who had made from forty to fifty-nine garments worked outside the home and that was full time. Five women worked who had made from twenty to thirty-nine garments, one part time and four full time.

TABLE XXV

THE EMPLOYMENT OUTSIDE THE HOME OF THE 57 WOMEN AND  
THE NUMBER OF GARMENTS CONSTRUCTED

Number of garments constructed	Employment outside the home			Total
	None	Part time	Full time	
None	5	1	4	10
1 to 9 garments	7	2	3	12
10 to 19 garments	9	2	2	13
20 to 39 garments	10	1	4	15
40 to 59 garments	4		1	5
71 to 76 garments	2			2
Totals	37	6	14	57

seventy-six garments did not work outside the home. Only one of five women who had made from forty to fifty-nine garments worked outside the home and that was full time. Five women worked who had made from twenty to thirty-nine garments, one part time and four full time.

Table XXVI shows the husband's occupation level in relation to the number of garments the women made. Eight of

the nine women whose husbands were in the first level did some garment construction. Twelve of the fourteen women in level two made garments while fourteen of the eighteen women in level three did. In level four the garment construction dropped to eight of the eleven women. Both women in level five did garment construction.

TABLE XXVI  
THE OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL OF THE HUSBAND AND THE NUMBER OF GARMENTS MADE BY 54 WOMEN\*

Number of garments made by women	Occupational level of the husband					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
None	1	2	4	3		10
1 to 9	2	2	4	2	1	11
10 to 19	2	5	4	1	1	13
20 to 39	3	3	5	3		14
40 to 59	1	2		1		4
71 to 76			1	1		2
Totals	9	14	18	11	2	54

\*Three of the women's husbands' occupations could not be classified on the Roe Scale.

The occupational level of the husband in relation to the expressed frequency of mending done is shown in Table XXVII. Of those who reported they often did mending seven were in level one, ten in level two, eight in level three,

five in level four, and one in level five. The two women who never did mending were in levels two and three.

TABLE XXVII

## THE OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL OF THE HUSBAND AND THE FREQUENCY OF MENDING BY 54 WOMEN\*

Frequency of mending by women	Occupational level of the husband					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Often	7	10	8	5	1	31
Sometimes	2	3	9	6	1	21
Never		1	1			2
Totals	9	14	18	11	2	54

\*Three of the women's husbands' occupation could not be classified on the Roe Scale.

Occupations of the husbands of the women who expressed they often altered and remodeled clothing were in the first three levels. Occupations of the husbands of women who never altered or remodeled garments were in all five levels (Table XXVIII). Women who sometimes did altering and remodeling were in all five levels as classified by the husband's occupation.

Draperies, curtains, and bedspreads were made often by women whose husbands fell in the second and third occupational levels. Those items were made sometimes and never by women whose husbands' occupations fell in all five levels (Table

TABLE XXVIII

## THE OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL OF THE HUSBAND AND THE FREQUENCY OF ALTERING AND REMODELING BY 54 WOMEN\*

Frequency of altering and remodeling by women	Occupational level of the husband					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Often	1	3	5			9
Sometimes	7	6	4	7	1	25
Never	1	5	9	4	1	20
Totals	9	14	18	11	2	54

\*Three of the women's husbands' occupation could not be classified on the Roe Scale.

TABLE XXIX

## THE OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL OF THE HUSBAND AND THE FREQUENCY OF CONSTRUCTION OF HOME FURNISHINGS BY 54 WOMEN\*

Frequency of construction of draperies, curtains, and bedspreads	Occupational level of the husband					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Often		1	3			4
Sometimes	7	9	7	5	1	29
Never	2	4	8	6	1	21
Totals	9	14	18	11	2	54

\*Three of the women's husbands' occupation could not be classified on the Roe Scale.

XXIX). Slipcovers were made sometimes by three women whose husbands' occupations fell into level two, by two women whose husbands' occupations were in level three, by two women whose husbands' occupations were in level four, and by one woman whose husband's occupation was in level five. One woman made slipcovers often and her husband's occupation level was the third level.

The first reason expressed by the women for home sewing and the husband's occupation level are shown in Table XXX.

TABLE XXX

THE OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL OF THE HUSBAND AND THE FIRST  
EXPRESSED REASON GIVEN FOR HOME SEWING  
BY 54 WOMEN\*

Expressed reason given	Occupational level of husband					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Enjoyment	3	4	6	3		16
More economical		3	5	2		10
Garments were needed	2	1	1	1		5
Better quality		1		2		3
Better fit	1	1				2
Could not find what was wanted		1		1		2
Opportunity to be creative			1	1		2
Found it challenging		1				1
Seldom bought ready-made garments			1			1
No answer given	2	3	4	2	1	12
Totals	9	14	18	11	2	54

\*Three of the women's husbands' occupations could not be classified on the Roe Scale.

Three women whose husbands' occupations were classified as level one expressed enjoyment as their first reason for sewing. No woman whose husband's occupation level was one listed as her first reason for sewing more economical. One of the women whose husband's occupation was in the fifth level gave no answer and another stated the first reason she did home sewing was because she could not find what she wanted. Table XXXI shows all the reasons expressed and the occupation level of the husbands. Two women whose husbands were classified in level one gave more economical as a reason for home sewing and five gave enjoyment.

The women were asked to check the area in which they had received clothing construction education. Forty-one women received clothing construction education at the high school level, thirty-two from their mothers, thirty-two from self-help, nineteen at the junior high school level, sixteen from 4-H work, sixteen from a friend, ten from adult education classes, eight at the college level, four from commercial classes, three from their grandmothers. One individual received clothing construction education from an aunt and another in a garment factory. Eighteen of the forty-one who had received clothing construction education at the high school level felt it was the most useful instruction, ten felt self-help was the most useful, five felt they received their most useful instruction in college, five felt their mothers gave them the most useful instruction, three felt

TABLE XXXI

THE OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL OF THE HUSBAND AND THE EXPRESSED  
REASONS GIVEN FOR HOME SEWING BY 54 WOMEN\*

Expressed reason given	Occupational level of husband					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
More economical	2	5	10	5	1	23
Enjoyment	5	6	7	2	1	21
Better workmanship	1	4	1	2		8
Better fit.	2	1	3	2		8
Better quality		2	2	1	1	6
Garments were needed	3	1	1	1		6
Could not find what was wanted		1	1	1	1	4
Opportunity to be creative		1	1	1	1	4
Enjoyed seeing finished product	1				1	2
Allowed for more styles of clothing		1	1			2
Good use of time			1	1		2
Found it challenging		1				1
Seldom purchased ready-made garments			1			1
Desired high fashion				1		1
Was in the mood to sew		1				1
Made matching garments for family			1			1
Allowed individualism		1				1
No answer given	2	3	4	2	1	12

\*Three of the women's husbands' occupations could not be classified on the Roe Scale.

their most useful instruction came from junior high school, two women felt they received their most useful instruction from a grandmother, a friend, and in an adult education class, and single individuals felt their most useful instruction came from a commercial class and 4-H work. Table XXXII shows the total number of garments made by each woman and her expressed area of most useful clothing construction education. Many of the women who expressed high school and self-help as their most useful area of instruction made a larger number of garments.

TABLE XXXII

THE NUMBER OF GARMENTS CONSTRUCTED BY 57 WOMEN AND THE  
EXPRESSED AREA OF MOST USEFUL CLOTHING  
CONSTRUCTION EDUCATION

Area of most useful instruction	Number of garments constructed						Total
	None	1 to 9	10 to 19	20 to 39	40 to 59	71 to 76	
Senior high school	2	6	3	5	1	1	18
Self-help		1	4	1	3	1	10
College	1		1	3			5
Mother	1		2	1	1		5
Junior high school		2	1				3
Friend	1			1			2
Adult education classes		1		1			2
Grandmother	1			1			2
4-H work				1			1
Commercial classes					1		1
No answer given	4	2	1	1			8
Totals	10	12	13	15	5	2	57

The occupation level of the husband and the expressed area of most useful instruction in clothing construction is shown in Table XXXIII. None of the women whose husbands fell into occupation level one listed self-help as their most useful area of instruction, four listed high school, two listed

TABLE XXXIII

THE OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL OF THE HUSBAND AND THE EXPRESSED AREA  
OF MOST USEFUL CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION  
EDUCATION BY 54 WOMEN\*

Area of most useful instruction	Occupational level of husband					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Senior high school	4	2	6	4		16
Self-help		4	3	2		9
College	2	2	1			5
Mother	1	2	2			5
Junior high school		1		1	1	3
Friend				2		2
Adult education classes			2			2
Grandmother		1	1			2
4-H work			1			1
Commercial classes	1					1
No answer given	1	1	3	2	1	8
Totals	9	14	18	11	2	54

\*Three of the women's husbands' occupations could not be classified on the Roe Scale.

college, one listed mother, and one listed commercial classes. Two women in level two listed high school as the area of most useful instruction and two listed college. In level three six women listed high school as the area where they received

their most useful instruction, two listed adult education classes, and one listed college. Four women in level four listed high school as the area where they received the most useful instruction and one listed junior high school. The one woman in level five who gave an answer listed junior high as the area where she received her most useful instruction. She had received other formal instruction in clothing in high school.

Out of nine women between the ages of twenty and twenty-four years only three felt their most useful clothing construction education came from high school and one from junior high school. Nine women between the ages of twenty-five and twenty-nine felt their most useful instruction was in high school, one in junior high school, one in college, and one in a commercial class. In the age range between thirty and thirty-five, seven women felt high school gave them their most useful instruction, four felt college did, two felt adult education did, and one felt junior high school did (Table XXXIV).

The women were asked to give the age when they first began to make garments and household items. The age range and the number of each age are shown in Table XXXV with the expressed amount of garment construction. Most of the women who expressed they did garment construction often or sometimes started to do so in their teens or before.

TABLE XXXIV

## THE AGE GROUP CLASSIFICATION OF 57 WOMEN AND THE EXPRESSED AREA OF MOST USEFUL CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION EDUCATION

Area of most useful instruction	Ages of women				Total
	20-24	25-29	30-35	Over 35	
Senior high school	2	9	7		18
Self-help	2	3	5		10
College		1	4		5
Mother	1		2	2	5
Junior high school	1	1	1		3
Friend	1		1		2
Adult education classes			2		2
Grandmother		2			2
4-H work	1				1
Commercial classes		1			1
No answer given	1		5	2	8
Totals	9	17	27	4	57

The age at which the women first began to sew is shown in Table XXXVI in relation to the area they expressed as being the most useful for clothing construction education. From that table it would seem that most of those who began in their teens also found their school instruction the most useful.

TABLE XXXV

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE AGE AT WHICH 57 WOMEN FIRST  
BEGAN GARMENT CONSTRUCTION AND THE FREQUENCY OF  
GARMENT CONSTRUCTION BY THOSE WOMEN

Age at which respondent began sewing	Frequency of garment construction by number of women			Total
	Often	Sometimes	Never	
8	1			
10	3	2		5
11	3	1		4
12	6	1		7
13	3	5		8
14	5	4	2	11
15		1		1
16	1	2		3
17		1		1
19	1			1
20	1			1
21		1		1
22	1			1
23	1			1
24		2		2
25	1	2		3
32		1		1
No age given			5	5
Totals	27	23	7	57

TABLE XXXVI

THE SOURCE OF MOST USEFUL CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION EDUCATION OF 57 WOMEN IN AND THE AGE  
WHEN THOSE WOMEN FIRST BEGAN GARMENT CONSTRUCTION

Source of most useful instruction	Age at which respondent began sewing, by number of women										Total								
	8	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	32	None	
Senior high school	1	3	2	2	3	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	18
Self-help	1			3	1													10	
College	1		2		1													5	
Mother		1			3													5	
Junior high school				2														3	
Friend					1													2	
Adult educa- tion classes	1					1												2	
Grandmother		1																2	
I-H work	1																	1	
Commercial classes							1											1	
No answer given	1		1												1	1	3	8	
Totals	1	5	4	7	8	11	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	5	57	

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Research done on a large scale, using a random population in all regions of the country, in both urban and rural areas, could show much more accurately the sewing habits of women. Most of the previous work concerning home sewing habits had been done with small groups of women of similar socio-economic backgrounds. The findings generally seemed to follow trends of findings in similar studies. This study was small in terms of sample number and it was limited to only one section of the country and to a community where the living environment was more rural than urban.

Few women made no garments and even fewer did no mending. Most sewing was done for the women themselves and very few women did any sewing for their husbands or other men. Most women found it necessary to do some altering. A much smaller portion of the group constructed large household items.

One type of home sewing which warrants further research is the construction of large household items. Since fewer women in this study constructed those items than constructed garments, the question arises, is this the true situation in home sewing throughout the country? Is this due to the lack of skills being taught, a need for smaller numbers of such items, a need for large household items only after a move or redecoration, or is the lack of construction of large household items due to other reason?

The idea that women sewed primarily for economic reasons has gradually given way to recognition that women sew just as often for enjoyment. Many women who said they sew for economic reasons also reported the most important reason for sewing as enjoyment. That would seem to indicate if women did not enjoy sewing they might find their time more valuable for other activity which might or might not have economic compensation. Few women whose husbands' occupations were in the upper numerical levels said they sewed for economic reasons.

Women without sewing machines did less sewing, but the type of sewing machine owned and the kind of stitch made was not related to the number of garments constructed. Most women did mending whether they owned a sewing machine or not. The type of sewing machine owned had little relationship to the frequency of altering and remodeling. Women who did not own sewing machines did not construct large household items..

The room in which the sewing machine was kept in the home was where the women felt they could work best but did not always mean it was the place where the women would like it kept. Many of the women who sewed would have liked a special sewing area and several of those would have liked to have a room used exclusively for sewing. Few women in the study felt they could at their present income level afford such a room. The lack of justification for a room used exclusively for sewing had no connection with the occupation level of the husband. Whether a sewing machine was kept open

or closed, when not in used, had little to do with the frequency of sewing regardless of the room in which it was placed.

The age of a woman and the number of children in the family had little bearing on the frequency or type of sewing done. Women without children sometimes made children's garments and many women with children did not. In this study the women making the larger numbers of garments for the most part did not work outside the home. The level of the husband's occupation had little to do with the frequency and type of sewing done. More detailed study of the socio-economic background of the family could give a more accurate account of its association with the woman's sewing habits.

Senior high school was the place where the largest number of women had had clothing construction instruction and the place listed more often as having given the most useful instruction. Formal school instruction given in the teens seemed to be more effective in producing women who continued to sew. As stated early in the study, most of the women who expressed they did garment construction started to do so in their teens. This indicates that early instruction in clothing construction should be the most useful.

Most study of principles and techniques learned in clothing construction classes might indicate why certain types of home sewing are done less often or are never done by women. It would be of interest to find out how many women learned how to alter or remodel clothing in junior or senior high

school classes, and if they did have this type of instruction, what outcome it had on their future altering and remodeling habits. The same is true of mending. Another study which might prove invaluable is the cause for dislike of sewing or the discontinuance of it once a student has completed a clothing construction course.

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**APPENDIX A**

Post Office Box 175  
Fairview, Kansas  
January 2, 1965

Dear :

The questions asked in this survey are to be used as partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master's degree with a major in Clothing and Textiles at Kansas State University. All the information given will be held in the strictest confidence. There is no need to place your name on the questionnaire or the envelope in which it is to be returned. I would greatly appreciate it if you would fill out the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope as soon as possible.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Yours truly,

Rosemary Sutton

## QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Check the type of sewing you do.

often   sometimes   never

_____	_____	_____	garment construction
_____	_____	_____	mending garments
_____	_____	_____	altering and remodeling garments
_____	_____	_____	making draperies, curtains, bedspreads
_____	_____	_____	making slipcovers
_____	_____	_____	list other _____

2. List the approximate numbers and kinds of garments which you have made for yourself in the past year.

number	number
_____ skirts	_____ slacks
_____ blouses	_____ shorts
_____ cotton dresses	_____ culottes
_____ better dresses	_____ sleepwear
_____ suits	_____ housecoats
_____ jackets	_____ formal wear
_____ coats	_____ list other _____

3. List the approximate numbers and kinds of garments you have made for other family members in the past year.

women's garments	men's garments	children's garments
_____ skirts	_____ sport shirts	_____ dresses
_____ blouses	_____ dress shirts	_____ skirts
_____ cotton dresses	_____ slacks	_____ blouses
_____ better dresses	_____ jackets	_____ girls' shorts
_____ suits	_____ vests	_____ girls' slacks
_____ jackets	_____ suits	_____ girls' coats
_____ coats	_____ overcoats	_____ boys' coats
_____ slacks	_____ sleepwear	_____ shirts
_____ shorts	_____ robes	_____ boys' pants
_____ culottes	_____ list other	_____ jackets
_____ sleepwear	_____	_____ sleepwear
_____ housecoats	_____	_____ robes
_____ formal wear	_____	_____ layette items
_____ list other _____	_____	_____ list other _____

4. List the kinds and numbers of household items made during the past year.

_____ curtains (pairs)	_____ draperies (pairs)
_____ bedspreads	_____ slipcovers
_____ list other _____	_____

5. If you sew for persons outside your immediate family, list the person's relationship to you and his approximate age.

relationship	age	relationship	age

6. List the kinds and numbers of garments which you have made for these people the past year.

kind of garments	number	kind of garments	number

7. If I make new garments, I do so because:

---



---



---



---

8. Check the garments which you really like to make when you have the time.

women's garments	men's garments	children's garments
skirts	sport shirts	dresses
blouses	dress shirts	skirts
cotton dresses	slacks	blouses
better dresses	jackets	girls' shorts
suits	vests	girls' slacks
coats	suits	girls' coats
jackets	overcoats	boys' coats
slacks	sport shorts	shirts
shorts	sleepwear	boys' pants
culottes	robes	jackets
sleepwear	list other	sleepwear
housecoats		robes
formal wear		layette items
list other		list other

---

9. I would rather buy ready-made clothes not checked above because:

---

I do not feel I have the sewing skills needed to make them

I cannot get the finished look I desire  
 I cannot make the clothes fit satisfactorily  
 I desire fabric which is not readily available  
 I believe it is as cheap or cheaper to buy ready made  
 list other \_\_\_\_\_

10. If I mend clothing it is because:

I believe I have to  
 I find I can save money in the long run because the clothes last longer  
 I can mend while doing such things as watching TV, which justifies the use of that time for relaxation  
 I prefer to see patches rather than holes  
 list other \_\_\_\_\_

11. What type of altering and remodeling do you do?

often sometimes never

            changing hemlines  
             changing sleeve length  
             changing size of waist line  
             changing hip line  
             changing bust line  
             complete restyling  
             list other \_\_\_\_\_

12. If I alter or remodel clothes it is because:

---

---

---

---

13. What kind of sewing machine do you have?

portable       treadle  
 electric console       none

14. What type of stitch or stitches does your machine make?

straight stitch only       chain stitch only  
 zig zag stitches with       list other \_\_\_\_\_  
variations

15. Check the pieces of sewing and pressing equipment you have and the equipment you use when sewing.

## sewing equipment

## own use

- wrist pincushion
- pincushion
- cutting shears
- embroidery scissors
- pinking shears
- seam gauge
- thimble
- tracing wheel
- dress form
- special sewing table
- hem marker
- tailor's chalk
- list other \_\_\_\_\_

## pressing equipment

## own use

- ironing board
- sleeve board
- seam board
- dry iron
- steam-dry iron
- steam-spray-dry iron
- pressing cloth
- pressing mitt
- pressing ham
- pounding block
- list other \_\_\_\_\_

16. Do you think having more equipment would improve your sewing? Yes  No

17. If you feel more sewing and pressing equipment would enlarge the amount and type of sewing done, list the equipment you would add.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

18. Check the room in which you keep your sewing machine.

<input type="checkbox"/> bedroom	<input type="checkbox"/> den
<input type="checkbox"/> dining room	<input type="checkbox"/> special dining room
<input type="checkbox"/> kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/> utility room
<input type="checkbox"/> living room	<input type="checkbox"/> list other _____

19. Do you keep your sewing machine cabinet open when you are not sewing?

Yes       No

20. Would the placement of your sewing machine in another room allow you to sew more?

Yes       No

21. Check the room where placement of your sewing machine would allow you to sew more.

<input type="checkbox"/> bedroom	<input type="checkbox"/> den
<input type="checkbox"/> dining area	<input type="checkbox"/> special sewing room
<input type="checkbox"/> kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/> utility room
<input type="checkbox"/> living room	<input type="checkbox"/> list other _____

22. If you were building a new house with your present income do you feel you could justify a special sewing area in a room such as the laundry or utility room?  
\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

23. If building a new home with your present income do you feel you could justify a room used exclusively for sewing?  
\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

24. I first began making garments and household items at the age of \_\_\_\_.

25. Check the following places where you have had clothing construction education.

____ junior high	____ friend
____ senior high	____ self taught
____ college	____ adult education classes
____ 4-H	____ commercial classes
____ mother	____ list other _____

26. Where do you feel you received your most useful instruction?  
\_\_\_\_ 20-24  
\_\_\_\_ 25-29  
\_\_\_\_ 30-35

27. What is your approximate age?  
\_\_\_\_ 20-24  
\_\_\_\_ 25-29  
\_\_\_\_ 30-35

28. What are your children's ages? \_\_\_\_ none \_\_\_\_\_ boys  
\_\_\_\_ girls

29. Describe in detail your husband's occupation \_\_\_\_\_

30. Do you work outside the home?  
\_\_\_\_ No  
\_\_\_\_ Yes, part time  
\_\_\_\_ Yes, full time

31. If your answer was yes, describe the type of work you do \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX B**

Post Office Box 175  
Fairview, Kansas  
October 27, 1964

Church  
Bolivar, Missouri

Dear Mr. \_\_\_\_\_:

In August of this year I contacted you in regard to a study I was doing as part of the work for the Master of Science degree at Kansas State University. At the time you indicated your willingness to cooperate with me in obtaining the number of women attending your church between the ages of twenty and thirty-five and their names should they be chosen as a part of the study. As the women of your church have been chosen it would be very much appreciated if you could send the names and addresses of the women who are in that age group.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Rosemary Sutton

THE HOME SEWING HABITS OF A SELECTED GROUP OF  
MARRIED WOMEN LIVING IN A SMALL TOWN

by

ROSEMARY CALLAWAY SUTTON

B. S., Southwest Missouri State College, 1959

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Clothing and Textiles

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

1967

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the frequency and type of home sewing and the expressed reasons for home sewing by married women. Also investigated was the type of equipment used and its placement in the home. These factors were evaluated in association with socio-economic information about the women and their families.

A questionnaire was mailed to a sample of 107 married women living in Bolivar, Missouri. The sample was drawn from ministers in Bolivar. The town had a wide variation of socio-economic levels. Fifty-seven women returned usable questionnaires.

Few women made no garments and even fewer did no mending. Most sewing was done for the women. Very little sewing was done for husbands. Most women found it necessary to do some type of alterations on their family's garments. A small portion of women constructed large household items.

The women sewed mainly for economy and enjoyment. Few women whose husbands' occupations were in the upper socio-economic levels said they sewed for economic reasons.

The type of sewing machine owned and the kind of stitch made had little or no effect upon the number of garments made by each woman. Most women did mending whether they owned a sewing machine or not. The type of sewing machine owned had little to do with the frequency of altering and remodeling. Women who did not own sewing machines did less sewing than others and did not construct large household items. Those

who owned zig zag stitch machines made household items more often than women who owned straight stitch machines.

The room in which the sewing machine was kept in the home was where the women felt they could work best. It was not always the place where the women would have liked the machine kept. Few women in the study felt they could at their present income level afford such an exclusive sewing room. The manner in which a woman kept her sewing machine, open or closed when not in use, had little to do with the frequency of sewing.

The age of a woman and the number of children in the family had little relationship to the frequency or type of sewing done. Women without children sometimes made children's garments and many women with children did not. In this study the women making the larger number of garments for the most part did not work outside the home. The level of the husband's occupation had little to do with the frequency and type of sewing done.

Senior high school was the place where the largest number of women had had clothing construction education and the place listed more often as having given the most useful instruction. Formal school instruction given in the teens seemed to be more effective in producing women who continued to sew.

More study into the principles and techniques learned in clothing construction classes might indicate why certain

types of home sewing are done less often or are never done by women. Another area of study which might prove invaluable is the cause for dislike of sewing or the discontinuance of it once a student has completed a clothing construction course.